BEYOND the FRONTIER
A STORY OF EARLY DAYS
by RANDALL PARRISH

SYNOPSIS.

—12—

Adele la Chesnayne, a belle of New France, is forced into marriage with Commissaire Cassion, henchman of Governor La Barre, who is plotting to oust La Salle and his garrison from the frontier Fort St. Louis, on the Illinois river. Adele had overheard the plotters say she had inherited a great fortune from her father and they had kept it from her. La Barre and Cassion learned of the girl's knowledge—thus the marriage and the hurried departure of Cassion and a company for Fort St. Louis. The bride refuses to share sleeping quarters with her husband. She has but one friend, young Rene d'Artigny, a guide. He is chary of helping her. Chevet, the girl's uncle, one of the party, is found murdered. A fierce storm scatters and wrecks the boats. Adele is rescued by D'Artigny. They learn they had thought one another guilty of Chevet's murder. Adele loves her rescuer. They hide from a search party and with a new found friend, Barbeau, proceed overland toward Fort St. Louis.

Madame Cassion owes her life to D'Artigny. She is now in his hands. She loves him. She has a high sense of honor and obligation. Will her conscience force her to go on to the fort, where her husband is, and tell him she thinks her real lover may be a murderer—giving her reason for the belief? In this installment the author gives a vivid portrayal of her dilemma at the very time her life is in grave danger.

CHAPTER XV—Continued.

Madame Cassion, D'Artigny and Barbeau are making their way in canoe and on foot to Fort St. Louis.

I was but a girl in years, excitement was still to me a delight, and I had listened to so many tales, romantic, wonderful, of this wilderness fortress, perched upon a rock, that my vivid imagination had weaved about it an atmosphere of marvel. The beauty of the view from its palisades, the vast concourse of Indians encamped on the plains below, and those men guarding its safety—the faithful comrades of La Salle in explorations of the unknown, De Tonty, Boisrondet, and all the others, had long since become to my mind the incarnation of romantic adventure. Wilderness born, I could comprehend and appreciate their toils and dangers, and my dreams centered about this great, lonely rock, on which they had established a home. But the end was not yet. Just below the confluence of the rivers there was a village of the Tamaroas, and the prow of our canoe touched the bank, while D'Artigny stepped ashore amid a tangle of low-growing bushes, that he might have speech with some of the warriors, and thus learn conditions at the fort. With his foot on the bank, he turned laughing, and held out his hand to me.

"Come, madame," he said, pleasantly, "you have never seen a village of our western tribes; it will interest you."

I joined him gladly, my limbs feeling awkward under me, from long cramping in the boat, yet the climb was not difficult, and he held back the boughs to give me easy passage. Beyond the fringe of brush there was an open space, but as we reached this, both paused, stricken dumb by horror at the sight which met our view. The ground before us was strewn with dead, and mutilated bodies, and was black with ashes where the tepees had been burned, and their contents scattered broadcast.

Never before had I seen such view of devastation, of relentless, savage cruelty, and I gave utterance to a sudden sob, and shrank back against D'Artigny's arm, hiding my eyes with my hand. He stood and stared, motionless, breathing heavily, unconsciously gripping my arm.

"Mon Dieu!" he burst forth, at last. "What meaneth this? Are the wolves again loose in the valley?"

He drew me back, until we were both concealed behind a fringe of leaves, his whole manner alert, every instinct of the woodsman instantly awakened.

"Remain here hidden," he whispered, "until I learn the truth; we may face grave peril below."

He left me trembling and white-lipped, yet I made no effort to restrain him. The horror of those dead bodies gripped me, but I would not have him know the terror which held me captive. With utmost caution he crept forth, and I lay in the shadow of the covert, watching his movements. Body after body he approached, seeking some victim alive, and able to tell the story. But there was none. At last he stood erect, satisfied that none beside the dead were on that awful spot, and came back to me.

"Not one lives," he said soberly, "and there are men, women, and children there. The story is one easily told—an attack at daylight from the woods yonder. There has been no fighting; a massacre of the helpless and unarmed."

"But who did such deed of blood?"

"'Tis the work of the Iroquois; the way they scalped tells that, and besides I saw other signs."

"The Iroquois," I echoed incredulous, for that name was the terror of my childhood. "How came these savages so far to the westward?"

"Their war parties range to the great river," he answered. "We followed their bloody trail when first we came to this valley. It was to gain protection from these raiders that the Algonquins gathered about the fort. We fought the fiends twice, and drove them back, yet now they are here again. Come, Adele, we must return to the canoe, and consult with Barbeau. He has seen much of Indian war."

The canoe rode close in under the bank. Barbeau holding it with grasp on a great root. He must have read in our faces some message of alarm, for he exclaimed before either of us could speak:

"What is it—the Iroquois?"

"Yes; why did you guess that?"

"I have seen signs for an hour past which made me fear this might be true. That was why I held the boat so close to the bank. The village has been attacked?"

"Ay, surprised and massacred; the ground is covered with the dead, and the tepees are burned. Madame is half crazed with the shock."

Barbeau took no heed, his eyes scarce glancing at me, so eager was he to learn details.

"The fiends were in force, then?"

"Their moccasin tracks were everywhere. I could not be sure where they entered the village, but they left by way of the Fox. I counted on the sand the imprint of ten canoes."

"Deep and broad?"

"Ay, war boats; 'tis likely some of them would hold twenty warriors; the beasts are here in force."

It was all so still, so peaceful about us that I felt dazed, incapable of comprehending our great danger. The river swept past, its waters murmuring gently, and the wooded banks were cool and green. Not a sound awoke the echoes, and the horror I had just witnessed seemed almost a dream.

"Where are they now?" I questioned faintly. "Have they gone back to their own country?"

"Small hope of that," answered D'Artigny, "or we would have met

The Ground Before Us Was Strewn With Dead.

with them before this, or other signs of their passage. They are below, either at the fort, or planning attack on the Indian villages beyond. What think you, Barbeau?"

"I have never been here," he said slowly, "so cannot tell what chance the red devils might have against the white men at St. Louis. But they are below us on the river, no doubt of that, and engaged in some hell act. I know the Iroquois, and how they conduct war. 'Twill be well for us to think it all out with care before we venture farther. Come, D'Artigny, tell me what you know—is the fort one to be defended against Iroquois raiders?"

"'Tis strong; built on a high rock, and approachable only at the rear. Given time, they might starve the garrison, or drive them mad with thirst, for I doubt if there be men enough there to make sortie against a large war party."

"But the Indian allies—the Algonquins?"

"One warwhoop of an Iroquois would scatter them like sheep. They are no fighters, save under white leadership, and 'tis likely enough their villages are already like this one yonder, scenes of horror. I have seen all this before, Barbeau, and this is no mere raid of a few scattered warriors, seeking adventure and scalps; 'tis an organized war party. The Iroquois have learned of the trouble in New France, of La Salle's absence from this valley; they know of the few fighting men at the Rock, and that De Tonty is no longer in command. They are here to sweep the French out of this Illinois country, and have given no warning. They surprised the Indian villages first, killed every Algonquin they could find, and are now besieging the Rock. And what have they to oppose them? More than they thought, no doubt, for Cassion and De la Durantaye must have reached there safely, yet at the best, the white defenders will scarcely number fifty men, and quarreling among themselves like mad dogs. There is but one thing for us to do, Barbeau—reach the fort."

"Ay, but how? There will be death now, haunting us every foot of the way."

D'Artigny turned his head, and his eyes met mine questioningly.

"There is a passage I know," he said gravely, "below the south banks yonder, but there will be peril in it—peril to which I dread to expose the lady."

I stood erect, no longer paralyzed by fear, realizing my duty.

"Do not hesitate because of me, monsieur," I said calmly. "French women have always done their part, and I shall not fail. Explain to us your plan."

CHAPTER XVI.

The Words of Love.

His eyes brightened, and his hand sought mine.

"The spirit of the old days; the words of a soldier's daughter, hey, Barbeau?"

"A La Chesnayne could make no other choice," he answered loyally. "But we have no time to waste here in compliment. You know a safe passage, you say?"

"Not a safe one, yet a trail which may still remain open, for it is known to but few. Let us aboard, and cross to the opposite shore, where we will hide the canoe, and make our way through the forest. Once safely afoot yonder, I will make my purpose clear."

A dozen strokes landed us on the other bank, where the canoe was drawn up, and concealed among the bushes, while we descended a slight declivity, and found ourselves in the silence of a great wood. Here D'Artigny paused to make certain his sense of direction.

"I will go forward slightly in advance," he said, at last, evidently having determined upon his course.

"And we will move slowly, and as noiselessly as possible. No one ever knows where the enemy are to be met with in Indian campaign, and we are without arms, except for Barbeau's gun."

"I retain my pistol," I interrupted.

"Of small value since its immersion in the lake; as to myself, I must trust to my knife. Madame, you will follow me, but merely close enough to make sure of your course through the woods, while Barbeau will guard the rear. Are both ready?"

"Perhaps it might be well to explain more clearly what you propose," said the soldier. "Then if we become separated, we could figure out the proper direction to follow."

"Not a bad thought, that. It is a rough road ahead, heavily wooded, and across broken land. My route is almost directly west, except that we bear slightly south to keep well away from the river. Three leagues will bring us to a small stream which empties into the Illinois. There is a faint trail along its eastern bank, which leads to the Rock, where it is possible for one knowing the way to attain the palisades of the fort. If we can attain this trail before dark we can make the remaining distance by night. Here, let me show you," and he drew with a sharp stick a hasty map on the ground. "Now you understand; if we become separated, keep steadily westward until you reach a stream flowing north."

In this order we took up the march, and as I had nothing to bear except a blanket, which I twisted about my shoulders, I found little difficulty in following my leader. At first the underbrush was heavy, and the ground very broken, so that oftentimes I lost sight entirely of D'Artigny, but as he constantly broke branches to mark his passage, and the sun served as guidance, I had small difficulty in keeping the proper direction. To our right along the river appeared masses of isolated rock, and these we skirted closely, always in the shadow and silence of great trees. Within half an hour we had emerged from the retarding underbrush, and came out into an open wood, where the walking was much easier.

The sun had not entirely disappeared when we emerged from the dark wood shadows into a narrow, grassy valley, through which flowed a silvery stream, not broad, but deep. Assured that this must be the water we sought, I sank to the ground, eager for a moment's rest, but D'Artigny, tireless still, moved back and forward along the edge of the forest to assure himself of the safety of our surroundings. Barbeau joined him, and questioned.

"We have reached the trail?"

"Ay, beside the shore yonder; see you anything of Indian tepees across the stream to the left?"

"Below, there are wigwams there just in the edge of the grove. You can see the outlines from here; but I make out no moving figures."

"Deserted then; the cowards have run away. They could not have been attacked, or the tepees would have been burned."

"An Algonquin village?"

"Miamis. I had hoped we might gain assistance there, but they have either joined the whites in the fort, or are hiding in the woods. 'Tis evident we must save ourselves."

"And how far is it?"

"To the fort? A league or two, and a rough climb at the farther end through the dark. We will wait here until after dusk, eat such food as we have without fire, and rest up for a bit of venture. The next trip will test us all, and madame is weary enough already."

"An hour will put me right," I said, smiling at him, yet making no attempt to rise. "I have been in a boat so long I have lost all strength in my limbs."

"We feel that, all of us," cheerily, "but come, Barbeau, unpack, and let us have what cheer we can."

I know not when food was ever more welcome, although it was simple enough to be sure—a bit of hard cracker, and some jerked deer meat, washed down by water from the stream—yet hunger served to make these welcome. The loneliness and peril of our situation had tendency to keep us silent, although D'Artigny endeavored to cheer me with kindly speech, and gave Barbeau careful description of the trail leading to the fort gate. If aught happened to him, we were to press on until we attained shelter. The way in which the words were said brought a lump into my throat, and before I knew the significance of the action, my hand clasped his. I felt the grip of his fingers, and saw his face turn toward me in the dusk. Barbeau got to his feet, gun in hand, and stood shading his eyes.

"I would like a closer view of that village yonder," he said, "and will go down the bank a hundred yards or so."

"'Twill do no harm," returned D'Artigny, still clasping my hand. "There is time yet before we make our venture."

He disappeared in the shadows, leaving us alone, and I glanced aside at D'Artigny's face, my heart beating fiercely.

"You did not like to hear me speak as I did?" he questioned quietly.

"No," I answered honestly, "the thought startled me. If—if anything happened to you, I—I should be all alone."

He bent lower, still grasping my fingers, and seeking to compel my eyes to meet his.

"Adele," he whispered, "why is it necessary for us to keep up this masquerade?"

"What masquerade, monsieur?"

"This pretense at mere friendship," he insisted, "when we could serve each other better by a frank confession of the truth. You love me—"

"Monsieur," and I tried to draw my hand away. "I am the wife of Francois Cassion."

"I care nothing for that unholy alliance. You are his only by form. Do you know what that marriage has cost me? Insults, ever since we left Quebec. The coward knew I dare not lay hand upon him, because he was your husband. We would have crossed steel a hundred times but for my memory of you. I could not kill the cur, for to do so would separate us forever. So I bore his taunts, his revilings, his curses, his orders that were insults. You think it was easy? I am a woodsman, a lieutenant of La Salle, and it has never before been my way to receive insult without a blow. We are not of that breed. Yet I bore it for your sake—why? Because I loved you."

"Oh, monsieur!"

"'Tis naught to the shame of either of us," he continued, now speaking with a calmness which held me silent. "And I wish you to know the truth, so far as I can make it clear. This has been in my mind for weeks, and I say it to you now as solemnly as though I knelt before a father confessor. You have been to me a memory of inspiration ever since we first met years ago at that convent in Quebec. I dreamed of you in the wilderness, in the canoe on the great river, and here at St. Louis. Never did voyageur go eastward but I asked him to bring me word from you, and each one bore from me a message of greeting."

"I received none, monsieur."

"I know that; even Sieur de la Salle failed to learn your dwelling place. Yet when he finally chose me as his comrade on this last journey, while I would have followed him gladly even to death, the one hope which held me to the hardships of the trail was the chance thus given of seeking you myself.

"You know the rest. I have made the whole journey; I have borne insult, the charge of crime, merely that I might remain, and serve you. Why do I say this? Because tonight—if we succeed in getting through the Indian lines—I shall be again among my old comrades, and shall be no longer a servant to Francois Cassion. I shall stand before him a man, an equal, ready to prove myself with the steel—"

"No, monsieur," I burst forth, "that must not be; for my sake you will not quarrel!"

"For your sake? You would have me spare him?"

"Oh, why do you put it thus, monsieur! It is so hard for me to explain. You say you love me, and—and the words bring me joy. Ay, I confess that. But do you not see that a blow from your hand struck at Francois Cassion would separate us forever? Surely that is not the end you seek. I would not have you bear affront longer, yet no open quarrel will serve to better our affairs. Certainly

I Found Little Difficulty in Following My Leader.

no clash of swords. Perhaps it cannot be avoided, for Cassion may so insult you when he sees us together, as to let his insolence go beyond restraint. But I beg of you, monsieur, to hold your hand, to restrain your temper—for my sake."

"You make it a trial, a test?"

"Yes—it is a test. But, monsieur, there is more involved here than mere happiness. You must be cleared of the charge of crime, and I must learn the truth of what caused my marriage. Without these facts the future can hold out no hope for either of us. And there is only one way in which this end can be accomplished—a confession by Cassion. He alone knows the entire story of the conspiracy, and there is but one way in which he can be induced to talk."

"You mean the same method you proposed to me back on the Ottawa?"

I faced him frankly, my eyes meeting his, no shade of hesitation in my voice.

"Yes, monsieur, I mean that. You refused me before, but I see no harm, no wrong in the suggestion. If the men we fought were honorable I might hesitate—but they have shown no sense of honor. They have made me their victim, and I am fully justified in turning their own weapons against them. I have never hesitated in my purpose, and I shall not now. I shall use the weapons which God has put into my hands to wring from him the bitter

"You Make It a Trial Test."

truth—the weapons of a woman, love, and jealousy. Monsieur, am I to fight this fight alone?"

At first I thought he would not answer me, although his handgrip tightened, and his eyes looked down into mine, as though he would read the very secret of my heart.

"Perhaps I did not understand before," he said at last, "all that was involved in your decision. I must know now the truth from your own lips before I pledge myself."

"Ask me what you please; I am not too proud to answer."

"I think there must be back of this choice of yours something more vital than hate, more impelling than revenge."

"There is, monsieur."

"May I ask you what?"

"Yes, monsieur, and I feel no shame in answering: I love you! Is that enough?"

"Enough! my sweetheart—"

"Hush!" I interrupted, "not now—Barbeau returns yonder."

What course do you think Adele would follow if she should learn that it is impossible to reach the fort?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MORE NERVY THAN THE MALE

Writer in Toledo Blade Comes Boldly Forward With a Tribute to the Fair Sex.

Tell a man that tight belts cause appendicitis and he loosens his belt at once, remarks the Toledo Blade. Warn him that stiff hats make the hair fall out and he carries his hat in his hand until he can find a soft one to put on. This is one of the striking differences between men and women.

You cannot scare a woman with any such threat. It must be centuries since women were told that stays would be everlasting ruin to them. But is there any decrease in the use of these articles? None that is indicated by the windows of the dry goods stores. Tight skirts were bound to shorten their steps permanently. V-necks would invite ills with the most terrifying names. Fur collars would weaken their resistance to murderous germs. But what did the women think of these cautionings? About as much as you would think of the humming of a gnat. They wore the tight skirts until they were blessed well ready to abandon them. They bared their necks to the wintry breezes as if there were no such thing. You may be sure that the fur collars will not come off until they become unfashionable. You may be equally sure that women will be callous to the advice of the Cleveland doctor now urging the discarding of high heels because they make bow legs.

The female of the species is more nervy than the male.

Mystery in Unclaimed Novel.

An "unclaimed" novel is the latest mystery of the London literary world. Some time ago an anonymous manuscript was left with a prominent publishing concern, which decided, in due course, to publish the same. Upon inquiry it was discovered that the author had not troubled to leave either name or address when he handed in his MS. Now all sorts of romantic conjectures have been made in connection with "Anonymous'" identity and ultimate fate—without, naturally, hurting the book's chances when it appears shortly.

Inadequate.

"The train service at Beanville is simply atrocious. Why, there are only two trains a day."

"Oh, well, I should think that would be enough to accommodate all the people who want to go there."

"Yes, but how about the people who want to get away?"

Was Mentioned.

"Were you mentioned in your uncle's will?"

"Yes, as a worthless cub who deserved nothing."

Too Much So.

"I wonder, now the militia troops are getting seasoned, if they are mustered out—" "Well?" "If they will get peppery?"

WEALTHY WAITER STICKS TO JOB

Falls Heir to $50,000 Estate in Austria, But Continues to Work.

HAS HOST OF FRIENDS

Surprised at Number of People Who Now Call Him by Name—Could Be Happy Only as a Waiter.

New York.—The story that Caesar knew the names of all his legionaries has been taken with some reserve. But the number he would have had to carry in his head is small compared to that of the persons who have demonstrated the ability since last Wednesday to call Sam Peristein by name. Sam is head waiter at a restaurant, in West Forty-first street, but he was such before last Wednesday. In fact, he had been all that for some years.

Sam admits that quite some persons had known and called him by his first name before Wednesday. He supposed, however, that his surname was as dark a secret as a 100-to-1 shot in the sixth race. But since Wednesday he has found that more persons can rattle off his full name than ever before saluted him by any name in his life. He has discovered also that many more persons are solicitous about his health and his family and his unborn future than ever before seemed to care a fig whether he had steak and potatoes or coffee and doughnuts.

New Lap in His Life.

In short, last Wednesday, really marked the beginning of a new lap in "Sam's" life. In fact, there is something of a coincidence about it. For on Wednesday Sam learned he had fallen heir to a $50,000 estate in Austria. Incidentally, many of the persons who suddenly have discovered that his name is a glib and delicate morsel to roll around their tongues, have confided to him as many different ways to double and treble his legacy just as easily as skinning a banana. Of course, they must do the skinning.

Sam learned that the wheel of fortune had rolled the good luck to him from a Park row lawyer, who was apprised of the glad tidings by a Vienna attorney. The wheel was spun by his uncle, Capt. Franz von Diesedorf of the Austrian army, who died recently from wounds received in battle. His uncle's estate is at present a military camp, a large contingent of the Austrian army bivouacing there. But Sam's property rights are intact.

Stays on the Job.

"What am I going to do? Why, stay right here, of course."

That was the way Sam answered the thousandth questioner last night. That

"I Am a Waiter by Choice and a Capitalist Only by Chance."

is the way he answered the first one, and all the intervening information seekers.

"I have been here since I was seventeen years old," continued Sam. "I am a waiter by choice and a capitalist only by chance. This money will make no difference to me. I probably shall put some of it in circulation, but I am not going to spend it in idleness, luxury or dissipation. I could be happy only as a waiter, and I am not going to let the income-tax law cause me an uneasy moment."

TOBACCO KEPT HER ALIVE

So Says Woman Celebrating Her Hundredth Birthday by Smoking a Pipe.

Washington, Ind.—Sarah Ellen Denny celebrated her hundredth birthday anniversary the other day. Sitting on the porch of the home of her daughter, Mrs. Dave Dove, smoking her old-fashioned clay pipe, she spent the day telling her friends of her early life.

She had used tobacco since she was sixteen years old, and says she believes tobacco is what "kept her alive."

Mrs. Denny was born June 8, 1816, in Teshimingo county, Tennessee, but has been a resident of Washington for many years. She gets about without the aid of a cane and does not wear glasses. She has traveled over twelve different states, behind a team of oxen, for the most part.

Lightning Hit Her Spectacles.

Fowler, Ind.—Mrs. Ida Campbell, who lives near Goodland, was sitting on the porch at her home recently during a storm when lightning struck her, melting the rims from her spectacles, and tearing her shoes from her feet. Mrs. Campbell was badly shocked and burned, but attending physicians say she will recover.

Few critics ever get what they are entitled to in this busy world.

A woman likes to have people say that she is looking young and is a member of an old family.

An old bachelor says that the vocalization at a wedding is even more depressing than the singing at a funeral.

The married man who waits for the owl car is sure to catch it when he gets home.